



NRC NEWS

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801 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov> E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663
Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC CITES D.C. COOK NUCLEAR POWER STATION FOR VIOLATION OF LOW TO MODERATE SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that a violation of NRC safety regulations at the D. C. Cook Nuclear Power station near Bridgman, Michigan, should be characterized as "white," meaning that it is an issue of low to moderate importance to safety. The two-reactor facility is operated by American Electric Power Company.

During an inspection conducted between August 2001 and May of this year, NRC inspectors determined that an essential service water (ESW) strainer was improperly installed. This resulted in lake sediment and debris being drawn into the water system on August 29 of last year.

When debris entered the system, which provides cooling for the emergency diesel generators and other plant safety equipment, the water flow to various heat exchangers was reduced.

The plant's four emergency diesel generators were not operating nor needed at the time; however, if they had been needed to supply power to plant safety systems, their function might have been impaired.

NRC inspection findings are evaluated using a four-level scale of safety significance, ranging from "green" for a finding of minor significance, through "white" and "yellow" to "red," for a finding of high safety significance.

The debris problem at D. C. Cook was initially characterized as a "yellow" finding in an inspection report available for viewing in the NRC's electronic reading room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using this on-line system is available by contacting the NRC Public Document Room at 301/415-4737 or 1/800/397-4209.

On July 25, the NRC held a regulatory conference with the utility to further discuss the company's views on this issue.

The NRC staff used the information presented by the utility in the regulatory conference and correspondence, along with its inspection findings, to issue the final safety significance determination of the problem as "white." The final determination is posted on the NRC's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/enforcement/actions/reactors>.

In addition to the white determination, the NRC issued a Notice of Violation to American Electric Power for violation of the NRC requirement that activities affecting quality must be prescribed by documented instructions, procedures, and drawings. The licensee had taken corrective action to preclude recurrence of the problem addressed in the Notice of Violation.

Because this is the utility's second "white" finding in the Mitigating Systems Cornerstone in the Reactor Safety and Strategic Performance Area, the NRC will increase its oversight activities for the utility.

The previous "white" finding involved the failure of the Unit 2 Turbine-Driven Auxiliary Feedwater Pump to start. It is described in NRC News Release III-02-029 issued on May 20. The news release is posted on the NRC's web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2002/>.

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